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Office of
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Major News Releases and Speeches

January 16-January 23, 1981

CLERICAL RECORDS

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Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

USDA STRENGTHENS WORK REQUIREMENT FOR FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 16--Able-bodied food stamp recipients must actively search for jobs or be dropped from the program under new rules announced today by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Labor.

"Under the new regulations, people who fail to look for a job on their own or who don't report for the interviews at their state employment office will find their households dropped from the food stamp program for two months," said Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Carol Tucker Foreman.

Those who are exempt from the work registration requirement are primarily the elderly and disabled, those already working, those responsible for the care of dependents or those already subject to work requirements under the unemployment insurance or work incentive programs.

The rules also require recipients who register for work to be called in to their state employment service--now identified as the job search in many states--for an interview and job classification.

State job service agencies will continue to refer registrants to potential employers, but now food stamp job seekers will also have to supplement this service with their own eight-week job search.

The new rules will establish as a standard that work registrants contact up to 24 potential employers within the eight week period, and also report back twice to their employment counselors on progress made, Foreman said. Requirements for each person's job search will depend on their individual circumstances and the availability of jobs in the community, as assessed by the job service counselor.

The state job services will report to state welfare agencies the names of food stamp job seekers who refuse to comply with the interviews or job search requirements, as well as those who find jobs.

The regulations will be published in the Jan. 16 Federal Register and become effective June 1.

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Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

WIND DAMAGES 1.1 MILLION ACRES IN GREAT PLAINS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19--Wind erosion damaged more than 1.1 million acres (440,000 hectares) of land in the Great Plains during the last two months of 1980, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

Norman A. Berg, chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service, said reports from the 10-state area show wind damage on 1,143,245 acres (457,298 hectares), down slightly from 1,390,901 acres (555,360 hectares) damaged during the same period in 1979.

Montana, with 327,082 wind-damaged acres (130,833 hectares), accounted for 29 percent of the total. The northern plains states were hardest hit with 89 percent of the damaged acreage.

Severe drought in the northern plains states the first half of 1980 resulted in many crops being abandoned, with no residues left to prevent erosion.

Of the total land reported damaged, 95 percent, 1,084,885 acres (433,954 hectares), was cropland; 4 percent, 44,445 acres (17,778 hectares), was rangeland; and 1 percent, 13,897 acres (5,559 hectares), was other land.

A breakdown of the damages, with 1979 comparisons, follows:

State	Counties Reporting	1980 Acres	1980 Hectares	1979 Acres	1979 Hectares
Montana	39	327,082	130,832	352,055	140,822
Nebraska	22	86,275	34,510	5,985	2,394
North Dakota	53	275,845	110,338	98,080	39,232
South Dakota	67	314,281	125,712	141,628	56,651
Wyoming	23	17,235	6,894	11,746	4,698
Colorado	37	16,920	6,768	8,660	3,464
Kansas	105	14,150	5,660	284,230	113,692
New Mexico	19	9,655	3,862	20,500	8,200
Oklahoma	30	22,220	8,888	139,100	55,640

Texas	147	59,582	23,833	328,917	131,567
TOTALS	542	1,143,245	457,298	1,390,90	556,360

Wind also destroyed crops or cover on 84,437 additional acres (33,775 hectares) of land not damaged. Of this, 82 percent, 66,496 acres (27,788 hectares) was in the northern plains.

The Soil Conservation Service each year compiles wind erosion reports covering seven months--November through May--using data supplied by 542 counties in the Great Plains.

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Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

SECRETARY BERGLAND EARMARKS WHEAT FOR FOOD SECURITY RESERVE

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19--Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland today said 4 million tons of wheat owned by the Commodity Credit Corporation will be used to constitute the nation's first food security reserve.

"With this action, we have realized a goal set by the Carter Administration to create a reserve which would help guarantee that this country will be able to meet its priority food aid commitments to developing nations. It will help ensure that the United States is a dependable supplier of food aid even in years of short supply," Bergland said.

Legislation to create such a reserve was introduced in 1978; however, it was not until last December that authorizing legislation was passed by the Congress and signed by the President.

"Wheat from this reserve will be used only for food aid and then, only when the domestic supply of wheat is so limited that sufficient quantities of wheat cannot be made available for disposition under P.L. 480 programs," Bergland said. "This insulates the security reserve from the marketplace and prevents the stored wheat from depressing commercial grain prices when supplies are more readily available."

The United States has been a major source of food aid to developing countries during the past 25 years. During that time, the United States has provided more than \$27 billion worth of commodities to help meet food needs of these countries.

Between 1973 and 1975, when world grain supplies were in short supply, the United States cut back on its food assistance to meet commercial demands just when the need for food aid was abnormally large. The food security reserve will help permit this nation to maintain food assistance programs when supplies are short, Bergland said.

"Maintaining a regular level of food aid is also important to the economic well-being of U.S. agricultural producers and the economies of both the United States and recipient countries," Bergland said. "We know from past experience that many nations that have received

significant quantities of food aid have become major commercial customers of U.S. agricultural products."

The CCC has already acquired the 4 million tons of wheat comprising the reserve as a result of direct purchases from producers and assumption of contracts cancelled by the suspension of sales to the Soviet Union. A small portion of the reserve--300,000 tons--can be used under Title II provisions without regard to domestic supply availabilities to meet urgent humanitarian relief in developing countries suffering a major disaster.

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Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

\$22 MILLION AVAILABLE IN USDA RESEARCH GRANTS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Science and Education Administration is accepting grant proposals for \$22 million in federal funding for research in the food and agricultural sciences.

Anson R. Bertrand, USDA director of science and education, said the funding is available through the special grants research program and the competitive grants research program.

During Fiscal Year 1981, \$6.7 million will be available under USDA's Special Research Grants Program to support research in antidesertification, soybeans, animal health and aquaculture.

Bertrand said that each year Congress designates the areas to be studied under this program to develop promising breakthroughs in the food and agricultural sciences and to expand ongoing state-federal research programs.

State agricultural experiment stations, colleges and universities with food and agricultural research capability are eligible to apply for the special research grants.

The deadlines for submitting special grant proposals are: Antidesertification research--April 17; soybean research--Feb. 13; Animal health--March 20; and Aquaculture--March 27.

The competitive research grants program supports basic research in plant sciences and human nutrition. During fiscal year 1981, \$12.6 million will be available for plant sciences research and \$2.9 million for human nutrition research.

Most of the grants awarded in Fiscal Year 1981 will be for one-to-three projects.

State agricultural experiment stations, all colleges and universities, other research institutions and organizations, federal agencies, private organizations or corporations and individuals are eligible to apply for grants under this program if they can demonstrate competence to do the research and have access to the needed facilities and resources.

Deadlines for submitting grant proposals for plant sciences research are: Biological stress on plants--Feb. 27; biological nitrogen fixation--Feb. 13; photosynthesis--Feb. 20; and genetic mechanisms for crop improvement--Feb. 20.

Grant proposals for research on human requirements for nutrients are due by Feb. 27.

Grant application kits for both programs are available from the Grants Administrative Management Office, Science and Education Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Suite 103, Rosslyn Commonwealth Building, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, Va. 22209. The telephone number is (703) 235-2638.

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Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

ORANGE AND GRAPEFRUIT JUICE, PORK, CHICKEN AND PEARS PLENTIFUL FOR FEBRUARY

USDA News-Feature Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21--Orange and grapefruit juice, pork, broiler-fryers, milk and dairy products, fresh winter pears, raisins and dried prunes, rice and dry beans and peas will all be in plentiful supply during February, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture marketing specialists.

The Florida freeze has reduced that state's supplies of fresh oranges and grapefruit and adversely affected quality. The embargo of fresh citrus shipments for 10 days beginning Jan. 18 may result in reduced availability of these fruits during early February, the specialists said. However, there should still be an adequate supply of fresh oranges and grapefruit. California produced a record crop of navel oranges.

Because heavy quantities of Florida citrus fruit are being processed to frozen concentrate and chilled and canned juice, there should be a plentiful supply of citrus juice during the next month.

Although February pork production will dip seasonally and be 5 to 7 percent below the record high rates of a year ago--supplies will remain large. There also will be a plentiful supply of broiler-fryers, with production rates 8 to 10 percent above the 1978-80 average for the month.

During February, there will be adequate supplies of beef and turkey. Weekly beef production rates for the month will be close to the rates of last February and be 6 to 8 percent below the 1978-80 average for the month. Overall turkey supplies will be 6 to 12 percent below a year earlier.

Milk and dairy products will be plentiful during the month and eggs will be in adequate supply. February milk production will exceed January output as production continues to increase seasonally into spring. The egg supply will be down 1 to 3 percent from a year earlier.

Because of the record crop of both winter pears and apples, there will be plentiful supply of both during February. Supplies of canned

non-citrus fruits will be adequate.

The 1980 raisin crop was 2-1/2 percent above 1979 and the largest since record crop in 1943. The 1980 dried prune crop was the largest since 1973. Both commodities will be in plentiful supply.

During February, there will be adequate supplies of: canned sweet corn, tomatoes, lima beans, snap beans and green peas; frozen lima beans, carrots, sweet corn, green peas, snap beans and spinach; fresh potatoes, frozen french fries and frozen potato products; and onions.

Supplies will range from adequate to light for: fresh broccoli, cabbage, celery, lettuce, snap beans, sweet corn, eggplant, green peppers and tomatoes.

Peanuts will be in light supply during February. The 1980 crop was the smallest since 1964. Some imports during the month may help augment the supplies.

Rice, dry beans and peas will be in plentiful supply during the month. The 1980 rice crop set a record--10 percent above 1979 and 19 percent above the 1977-79 average. The 1980 dry bean crop was 27 percent above the 1979 crop and 40 percent above the 1977-79 average; while the dry pea crop was 61 percent above 1979 and 48 percent above the 1977-79 average.

Plentiful is more than enough for requirements; adequate is enough to meet normal needs; and light is less than adequate, not enough for normal needs.

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Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT ON MILK PRICE SUPPORT

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21--The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking public comment until Feb. 17 on its midyear adjustment of the support price for milk and the prices and terms of purchase for butter, cheese and nonfat dry milk by the department's Commodity Credit Corporation.

CCC supports milk prices by purchasing surplus products from the market. Congress mandates that USDA must adjust the milk support price to reflect changes in the parity index in the first half of the marketing year. The adjusted support price will be effective April 1 through Sept. 30, the second half of the marketing year.

The index of prices paid, interest, taxes and wage rates (the parity index) is projected to increase about 6.9 percent between Oct. 1, 1980 and April 1, 1981. This would result in a 6.9 percent increase in the support price on April 1.

The support price in effect since Oct. 1, 1980, the beginning of the 1980-81 marketing year, is \$12.80 per hundredweight for manufacturing milk with 3.5 percent milkfat content or \$13.10 per hundredweight for milk with 3.67 percent milkfat, the national average.

Written comments should be directed to the director, procurement and sales division, ASCS-USDA, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C., 20013. All written comments will be available for inspection at the office of the director during regular business hours.

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USDA DECLARES NATIONAL EMERGENCY BECAUSE OF SWINE FEVER IN HAITI

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has declared an animal health emergency exists since the presence of African swine fever in Haiti represents a serious threat to the United States swine industry and consequently, to the national economy, according to Harry C. Mussman, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The action was taken to initiate measures for countering spread of the highly contagious disease to the United States, its territories and possessions.

The emergency declaration specifies that the "...emergency arising out of the existence of African swine fever in Haiti, a very close neighboring country ... constitutes a threat to the swine industry of the United States."

Puerto Rico is considered especially vulnerable to the disease, because is located approximately 75 miles from the Island of Hispanola, shared by Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Mussman said. "In turn, active tourism and trade between Puerto Rico and the United States would make it difficult to prevent spread to the mainland," he said. "There is no effective vaccine or treatment for the disease."

The declaration authorizes "...a program in cooperation with the Government of Haiti, and with other governments and international organizations or associations, in carrying out operations or measures to eradicate, suppress or control African swine fever in Haiti or to prevent or retard African swine fever or vectors thereof from being introduced into and disseminated in the United States."

"The Haitian government has requested assistance in combatting the disease," Mussman said, "and Mexico and Canada have expressed interest in the cooperating in the eradication effort."

African swine fever first invaded the western hemisphere in 1971. That outbreak, in Cuba, resulted in a half-million hogs being destroyed, Mussman said. In 1978, the disease was confirmed in the Dominican Republic, and Brazil, with Haiti becoming infected in 1979. Cuba

experienced a second outbreak early in 1980, which was rapidly eliminated.

The Dominican Republic elected to slaughter its entire swine population to eliminate the disease, Mussman said. With a loan provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development and technical assistance from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the slaughter program was completed in September 1980, and, after a period of surveillance, the country is now restocking with new pigs.

African swine fever is a highly contagious virus disease affecting only swine. Its symptoms in the acute form include high fever, red blotches on the skin, internal bleeding, collapse of the animal and nearly 100 percent death losses in the herd. The disease spreads rapidly like virulent forms of hog cholera. A milder, chronic form, with reduced death losses, has been experienced in some countries.

The disease is spread by infected live pigs and pork products, contaminated garbage, feed or water, contaminated premises, clothing, footwear and improper disposal of infected carcasses.

The disease can be eradicated, Mussman said, only by quarantining all farms in the vicinity of an outbreak, destroying all infected and exposed swine, surveying swine herds and cleaning and disinfecting all infected and exposed farms.

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Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

WORLD OILSEED SUPPLY TO BE ADEQUATE FOR 1980-81

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22--Global availability of both protein meals, fats and is expected to be adequate to cover foreseeable 1980-81 needs despite a drop in production, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's World Oilseed Outlook and Situation Circular expected to be released by Jan. 26.

The report says there are adequate supplies because of larger than normal carryover of the 1979-80 crops in the U.S. and Brazil soybeans and softening demand.

According to the report, world oilseed output for 1980-81 is now estimated 160.5 million metric tons--8 percent less than in 1979-80. This production level represents an equivalent of 86.4 million tons of 44 percent protein meal and 56.1 million tons of oils and fats (after adding in expected output of fishmeal and related miscellaneous oils and fats).

Highlights of the report include:

--U.S. soybean and product prices tumbled in December in response to exploding interest rates. After starting the month at 8.68 per bushel, spot Decatur prices dropped below 7.00 per bushel before beginning a recovery in mid-December.

--A combination of a much smaller world crop and large carry-in stocks results in world 1980-81 supplies 4 percent below the 1979-80 level. As a result, world soybean supply and use will be about in balance in 1980-81 with a modest reduction expected in ending stocks.

--World peanut production is estimated at 17.4 million tons--2 percent less than in 1979-80--as drought damage to the U.S. crop was nearly offset by better crops elsewhere.

--World copra and coconut oil trade in 1980 was highlighted by the re-emergence of Indonesia as a coconut oil exporter and the increasing tendency of exporters to ship products rather than raw copra. Indonesian 1980 coconut oil exports are estimated at 75,000 tons, whereas, in 1978, Indonesia imported 92,000 tons.

--Production of rapeseed is estimated at 11.1 million tons, 900,000 more than in 1979-80. Improved European harvests more than offset lower Canadian output. A major development in recent years has been the rapid introduction into Canada Europe of new varieties that are characterized by low levels of both erucic acid and toxic glucosinolates, resulting in much more desirable rapeseed products.

--World 1980 fishmeal production was 5 percent less than in 1979, according estimates by the Foreign Agricultural Service. Peruvian output dropped sharply, more than offsetting increases elsewhere.

--U.S. October-November trade in oilseeds and products was sharply below comparable period in 1979. Exports--at \$1.7 billion--were off by 25 percent imports--at \$108 million--dropped 20 percent.

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Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

USDA SIMPLIFIES PROCEDURE FOR APPEALS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22--People who have been denied assistance by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration now will find it easier to appeal the decision than in the past, a USDA official said today.

"A new procedure now being followed requires an informal discussion between the applicant and the person in our agency responsible for the decision," Kenneth Latcholia, acting administrator of the agency, said. "We often clear up misunderstandings informally, saving time and trouble for all.

"However, if an applicant wishes to formally appeal a decision, the new procedure clearly spells out how to do it and establishes definite time limits within which the agency must respond," he said.

"We also are setting up a reporting system to give us information on various types of appeals and how they are handled. In this way, we can develop a uniform approach in dealing with adverse decisions."

The Farmers Home Administration makes loans and grants to individuals and communities in rural areas who cannot get financing from other sources. The agency provides assistance in four areas--farming, housing, essential community facilities and business and industrial development--through nearly 2,000 district and state offices.

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Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

USDA REOPENS COMMENT PERIOD ON PILOT LABEL REVIEW PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22--The public comment period has been reopened until Feb. 23 on a U.S. Department of Agriculture pilot program to decentralize certain label review responsibilities, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

Donald L. Houston, administrator of the Food Safety and Quality Service, said the agency was asked by industry for additional time to evaluate the 120-day program, which began Dec. 1.

"On Oct. 31, FSQS announced it would test delegating certain labeling authority to inspectors-in-charge in the field," Houston said. "The program resulted from recommendations made by an FSQS task force. Comments were accepted until Dec. 31."

Under the program, meat and poultry plants in three inspection areas may elect in-plant review of certain labels which would otherwise be sent to Washington, D.C. The areas are: Missouri (Southwestern region), Kentucky (Southeastern region) and the Hyattsville area, which includes Maryland, Delaware, and the District of Columbia (Northeastern region).

"We're particularly interested in learning from industry if the program serves their needs for prompt label review," said Houston. Suggestions as to how the review process might otherwise be improved are also requested, he said.

Houston said analysis of the program and public comments will help FSQS determine whether field delegation should be implemented nationwide.

Comments should be sent by Feb. 23 to regulations coordination division, attn: Annie Johnson, rm. 2637-S, FSQS, USDA, Washington, D.C., 20250. For further information, contact Joan Moyer Schwing, deputy director, meat and poultry standards and labeling division, FSQS, USDA, Washington, D.C., 20250, (202) 447-4293.

Notice of the reopened comment period is expected to be published in the Jan. 23 Federal Register.

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